

Common Course Numbering Plan Connecticut State University System

Introduction

Pursuant to Special Act No. 07-7, *An Act Concerning Public Institution Of Higher Education System Transfer and Articulation Process*, the Department of Higher Education, in consultation with the constituent units of the state system of higher education, shall review the status and content of public institution of higher education system transfer and articulation agreements. Such review shall consider “a plan to implement common course numbering within the Connecticut State University System.”

The four comprehensive universities that comprise the Connecticut State University System—Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and Western Connecticut State University—share the goal of providing affordable, accessible, high quality learning opportunities, offering baccalaureate, graduate and professional programs in more than 160 subject areas, as well as a wide range of opportunities for internships, community service, and cultural engagement.

Faculty and other officials in the Connecticut State University System have for some time worked toward creating a more seamless process of credit transfer for the benefit of all students. The Connecticut State Universities have developed lengthy matrices of “transfer equivalencies” with some counterpart institutions; therefore, a student may determine which of their courses taken at a particular Connecticut State University is equivalent to a similar course at another Connecticut State University or at a Connecticut Community College. These equivalency matrices will be updated and utilized in the common course numbering implementation.

Also, faculty who teach basic skills in Connecticut State Universities have held regular meetings over the past few years to determine how best to teach the knowledge and skill sets required in such courses as basic math and introduction to writing. Their work in aligning course content and objectives between Connecticut State University institutions and other post-secondary schools provides valuable groundwork to further our common course numbering plans.

We believe this plan will continue the process of review and will benefit students by establishing a more seamless process for the movement of students from one institution of higher education to another without loss of credit or the need to repeat subjects already completed elsewhere.

Guiding Principles

The following principles provide a foundation for this plan:

The plan is developed as a means of supporting the best interests of students pursuing higher education, while ensuring that the unique mission of each Connecticut State University institution is preserved.

The plan assumes an initial focus on courses primarily at the freshman/sophomore level. This is because courses at this level are generally targeted to meeting general education requirements and are often taught at both two and four-year institutions.

The plan recognizes that faculty, who are the content experts, will develop criteria for determining course comparability and judge which are appropriate for common numbering, titling, pre-requisites, and/or number of credits.

The plan is a means to facilitate transfer and not as a means to standardize curricula, to stifle innovation or creativity, to impede course and curriculum redesign, or to restrict use of unique methodologies

The plan considers the experience of Connecticut's Community College System and the common course numbering processes implemented in states such as Colorado, California, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, North Dakota, and Texas.

The plan includes a timeline for implementation which is necessary to ensure the integrity of students' educational programs and responsibilities of faculty and the Universities to ensure a quality academic program.

Proposed Plan

General Approach

Courses will be examined and evaluated for comparability and/or equivalency by committees comprised of faculty from similar disciplines, subject matter, and departments. These committees, which are referred to later in this document as "disciplinary committees," will recommend which courses are candidates for common numbering. Faculty will examine such aspects as course titles, descriptions, objectives, expected outcomes, and standards.

At times it may be necessary to seek the opinion and counsel of other faculty, departmental chairpersons, deans, or University curriculum committee members. The objective is to identify as many courses with common numbers as possible in order to meet the letter and spirit of the legislation and facilitate the transfer process for students. There will nonetheless remain many courses that are "unique" and not appropriate for common numbering.

During this process, it may be desirable to utilize technology to help in the identification of course equivalencies, standards, and objectives. This is, for example, the route taken

by states such as Pennsylvania. Additional resources could be required to purchase and/or support the appropriate software to accelerate the process to shorten our timeline.

The disciplinary committees' recommendations will be presented to the Connecticut State University System Office after receiving the endorsement of Departments/Deans/University/Faculty Senates and/or University Presidents.

Phase One

Under the leadership of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at the Connecticut State University System Office, several disciplinary committees will be formed and charged with determining which courses in that particular discipline/department are appropriate for common numbering.

Each committee will be comprised of faculty from the four Connecticut State Universities. These faculty will have content expertise in the particular discipline/department being reviewed. When appropriate, other personnel such as transfer counselors, academic advisement coordinators, or registrars will be called upon to serve as consultants/advisors to the committees. If questions arise regarding committee composition at one or more institutions, or if there are issues regarding the number of committees needed, the Vice President(s)/Provost(s) of each involved University will be charged to resolve the issue.

A committee comprised of transfer counselors from each of the four Connecticut State Universities will complete a review of existing Connecticut State University transfer equivalencies and identify all lower division courses that have previously been designated as "comparable." The committee will ensure that there is transfer reciprocity in all identified credits for common course numbering.

The appropriate disciplinary committee will review those courses identified above that fall within their department/discipline and identify those appropriate for common course numbering. The committees shall develop criteria to identify course comparability and apply those criteria in their deliberations and evaluations. The disciplinary committees will also review the remaining lower division courses for comparability and identify said courses.

Phase Two

The disciplinary committees will review all upper division courses to identify those eligible for common numbering. The committees shall develop criteria to identify comparable courses and thus follow the same procedures as with lower division courses.

At the conclusion of phases one and two, all upper and lower division courses recommended for common numbering will have been identified.

Operational Development and Support

The actual new common numbers will be assigned utilizing a system to be developed in consultation with faculty, registrars, University and System Office IT personnel, departmental chairs, deans, and vice presidents. The numbering system developed should communicate to those reviewing one of our University transcripts the University offering the course, the course level (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior, graduate), and the discipline or department that taught the course.

This operational development and support process will be undertaken simultaneously with phases one and two.

Resource Considerations

The process for identifying courses for common numbering will require significant IT support in terms of data entry, software configuration, and creative problem solving. Because the curriculum undergoes continuous change, ongoing human and IT resources will be needed to keep the system current. Individual campuses of Connecticut State University will identify and prepare for these additional resource needs.

Timeline

Plan Development/Approval

11/15/2007 Committee Completes Plan
12/5/2007 Plan submitted to following for review/comment:
Chancellor
Council of Presidents
Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee
University/Faculty Senates
12/10/2007 Plan reviewed by each University
12/15/2007 Plan accepted by Chancellor
12/20/2007 Plan submitted to DHE for transmittal to legislature

Plan Implementation

Phase 1

2008-2010 Disciplinary Committees formed
Transfer counselors review Connecticut State University
equivalencies/reciprocity agreements and identify comparable lower
division courses
Disciplinary Committees review courses identified as comparable and
recommend lower division courses for common numbering
Recommendations endorsed by the following:
Departments/Deans/Chairs
University Senates
Presidents/Chancellor

Progress report presented to Legislature
Registrars, IT personnel, faculty, and others determine numbering system
and resolve the technical issues for transcript production

**Common course numbering for lower division courses implemented
by Connecticut State University System**

Phase 2

2011-2013 Disciplinary Committees identify comparable upper division courses
Recommendations endorsed by the following:

 Departments/Deans/Chairs

 University Senates

 Presidents/Chancellor

Progress report presented to Legislature

**Common course numbering for upper division courses implemented
by Connecticut State University System**

Maintenance

Since University curricula are continuously changed and under review, a system for maintaining the common course numbers needs to be developed and implemented. Periodic review should be instituted by each University, preferably through the existing curricular approval process.

When departments/faculty propose a new course, they are responsible for all of the usual course development such as content, title, objectives, credits, pre-requisites, budgetary impact, and other items required by the University faculty and management. They are also responsible for determining whether the course they propose is comparable to another Connecticut State University course(s) and thus appropriate for common numbering. Registrars and the Connecticut State University database need to be consulted to make this determination.

Finally, as stated in the resource section above, an appropriate IT system needs to be planned and implemented to assure both efficiency and effectiveness in maintaining common course numbering among the Connecticut State University institutions.